Bureau of Indian Standards does not involve itself in pricing of manufactured products.

Increase In The Export of Tobacco and Cigarettes

2125. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a quantum leap in the export of tobacco and cigarettes during the last two financial years; and

(b) what are the countries which are buying Indian cigarettes and the number of cigarettes likely to be exported during 1992-93?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The major countries buying Indian cigarettes are Rusia, Belarus, U. A. E, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Netherlands, Germany and Cyprus.

The number of cigarettes exported during 1992-93 is 2644 million pieces.

ब्रिटेन के साथ भारत के व्यापार संबंध

2126. **श्री अजीत जोगी**: क्या **प्रधान मंत्री** यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार ब्रिटेन के साथ अपने व्यापार संबंधों को बढ़ाने का विचार रखती है;

(ख) क्या इस वर्ष दोनों देशों के बीच मंत्रालय स्तर तथा उच्च स्तर पर बातचीत की गई थी;

(ग) यदि हां, तो उसका ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(घ) उन क्षेत्रों का ब्यौरा क्या है जिनमें भारत-ब्रिटेन व्यापार बढ़ाया जाएगा?

नागरिक आपूर्ति, उपभोक्ता मामले एवं सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री और वाणिज्य मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री का अतिरिक्त प्रभार (श्री कमालुद्दीन अहमद): (क) से (घ) सरकार का लगातार यह प्रयास रहता है कि द्विपक्षीय व्यापार को बढ़ाया जाए। दोनों सरकारों एवं दोनों पक्षों के व्यापारियों द्वारा हाल में किए गए सम्पर्कों तथा इंडो-ब्रिटिश पार्टनरशिप इनिशिएटिव स्थापित हो जाने से आर्थिक एवं व्यावसायिक सहयोग और बढ़ाने की आशा है।

नेफ्था का गैर-सरकारी एजेंसियों के माध्यम से आयात करने की अनुमति दिया जाना

2127. **श्री अजीत जोगी**: क्या **प्रधान मंत्री** यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार ने हाल ही में नेफ्था का आयात गैर-सरकारी एजेंसियों के माध्यम से करने की अनुमति दी है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो इसके क्या कारण है; और

(ग) इसके औषध तथा उर्वरक उद्योग को किस सीमा तक लाभ पहुंचेगा?

नागरिक आपूर्ति, उपभोक्ता मामले एवं सार्वजनिक वितरण मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री और वाणिज्य मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री का अतिरिक्त प्रभार (श्री कमालुद्दीन अहमद): (क) जी, हां।

(ख) और (ग) नेफ्था के आयात का गैर-सरणीकरण इसलिए किया गया है ताकि आयातकों को और प्रतियोगी आधार पर अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय बाजार से नेफ्था खरीदने में और अधिक सुविधा हो सके। हालांकि इतनी जल्दी गैर-सरणीकरण के प्रभाव का मूल्यांकन नहीं किया जा सकता, तथापि इस कच्चे माल के प्रयोक्ताओं से आशा की जाती है कि अपनी आयात लागतों में सापेक्षिक कमी करने के लिए वे इस उपाय से लाभ उठाएंगे।

2128. *[Transferred to 24th August, 1993]*

India's Trade Relations with SAARC Countries

2129. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what has been India's trade reletions with SAARC countries;

(b) the steps taken by Government to strengthen trade relations with these countries; and

(c) the extent to which the recent Dhaka Summit strengthens India's economic relations with these countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) India's trade with countries in the SAARC region namely Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Pakistan is governed by bilateral Trading Arrangements. We have a Treaty of Trade with Nepal and Trade Agreements with other coun-

tries except Pakistan. Trade preferences exchanged with Nepal and Bhutan under special arrangements whereas trade with Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives is conducted on MFN basis. Trade between India and Pakistan is taking place in accordance with the Import-Export Policy of the two countries. Pakistan is following a restrictive Trade Policy regarding imports from India whereas India is allowing imports from Pakistan on MFN basis.

(b) and (c) The SAARC Member countries have been meeting periodically to discuss possibilities of strengthening Inter-State Trade relations. An agreement has been signed at the Dhaka Summit on 11th April, 1993 under which it has been agreed in principle, that steps will be taken by the Member States to conduct trade among themselves on the basis of Preferential Trading Arrangement.

Identification of Land For Shrimp and Fish Culture

2130. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether M. P. E. D. A. has identified large area of land in Andhra Pradesh which is suitable for shrimp and fish culture; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) and (b) According to MPEDA about 1.5 lakh hectares of brackishwater area is estimated to be suitable for acquaculture in Andhra Pradesh.

Contribution of Andhra Pradesh Towards Export of Marine Products

2131. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Andhra Pradesh contributes overwhelmingly towards marine products exports, including marine catch and aquaculture products;

(b) the details of the contribution of Andhra Pradesh towards exports in this sector;

(c) whether it would be more rational to shift the headquarter of MPEDA to some suitable location in Andhra Pradesh;

(d) the steps being taken in this regard; and

(e) the number of employees engaged in Cochin office of MPEDA presently?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) and (b) Export details are not compiled State-wise. However, the details of units in Andhra Pradesh are being collected from MPEDA and the same will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) No Sir. MPEDA with its Headquarters at Cochin is functioning satisfactorily. MPEDA's regional and sub-regional offices located in different coastal States are providing the developmental services and assistance to entrepreneurs of that region.

(d) Does not arise;

(e) MPEDA Headquarters at Cochin employs 192 persons.

Removal of Difficulties Faced by Exporters

2132. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to take steps to remove all difficulties faced by exporters;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when exporters would be made free from all impediments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) and (b) The Government have taken several steps to remove the difficulties faced by exporters which include replacement of dual exchange rate system with a unified market determined exchange rate, revision of Export-Import Policy for 1992-97 giving particular attention to simplification and streamlining of policy and procedures, substantial reduction in import licensing and other discretionary controls, reduction of peak import tariff levels from 150% to 85%, reduction in the interest rate on rupee export credit, giving direc